

LIVUNI PEOPLE

5th Edition Winter 2022

In this edition

Volunteering, fundraising, furry friends, and some fascinating photos of a very snowy Liverpool Campus from times gone by.

THE ORIGINAL

REDBRICK

FOREWORD



Season's Greetings, Colleagues. I'm delighted to be writing the foreword for the final edition of LivUniPeople magazine of 2022. You will no doubt have noticed my mentions of the magazine in my weekly email updates over the past few years, and it is truly wonderful to see something that began with the aim of unifying colleagues during the dark days of the pandemic now being a regular publication.

This edition features stories on some inspirational fundraising and volunteering; our superheroes in scrubs at the Leahurst Campus who keep the Small Animal Teaching Hospital going over the festive period; fascinating insights into some of the work our Technical colleagues are involved in – which is paving the way for a strong future technical workforce; and an interview with one of our first female Professors of Engineering, Kate Black, on her career journey and women in STEM. There are also some beautiful wintry photographs of the Liverpool Campus from times gone by which have kindly been provided by the Special Collections & Archives Team in the Library.

Reading about the brilliant things that LivUniPeople are involved in is a great reminder of the powerful sense of community in this institution – it is one of the things I will miss greatly when I take my leave from the University at the end of this year.

I hope you enjoy this and future editions of LivUniPeople, and I wish all of you the very best for the years ahead.

Professor Dame Janet Beer
Vice-Chancellor

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A VERY FURRY CHRISTMAS

With Christmas just around the corner and a well-earned break on the horizon for many of us, LivUniPeople Editors visited the Leahurst Campus to chat to Briony Alderson, Head of the Small Animal Teaching Hospital and Small Animal Anaesthesia, about the festive period and how it's quite different for our colleagues there.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and what you do at Leahurst?

I'm Briony Alderson and I am Head of Small Animal Anaesthesia and Head of the Small Animal Teaching Hospital. I work in the Clinical Service teaching students how to do anaesthesia and also seeing our small animal patients (dogs and cats). We very occasionally see other animals, In the last couple of weeks we've had a bearded dragon and a tortoise, we also do occasional work for Chester Zoo. I also lecture at the Liverpool Campus and Leahurst.

Can you tell us about the work that staff typically do at the Small Animal Teaching Hospital over the festive period?

We typically have two types of days, we do emergencies-only days which are similar to our weekends where we have a core team of staff working, three junior staff (Interns and Residents) who are in the building all day and they'll help manage the

inpatients and admit any emergencies. If a Vet phones up wanting to admit a case, it will come to us and the patient will see one of those three Interns or Residents. We also have Seniors on call for the medical and surgical, and neurological disciplines, and then there's the Senior Anaesthetist who might get called into help if it's something more complex.

Our Nurses are so important to the team and the hospital does not manage without them. Over the emergency days we'll have 4 or 5 nurses in the building managing the inpatients, helping prepare cases for procedures, imaging surgery, things like that. We also have Senior Imagers on call, as most of our emergency cases need some form of imaging, which includes X-rays, ultrasounds, MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) and CT (Computerised Tomography), so our patients will get admitted and be dealt with immediately. Most of them will go straight to our Intensive Care Unit for assessment, and we triage



Above: an inpatient recovering from surgery.

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Our Nurses are so important to the team and the hospital does not manage without them.

them just like humans in A&E except we'll see you immediately, there's no 4-hour wait.

On the University closed days we have more staff on site because the small animal practices who send us cases are open as normal on those days. We expect to see more cases between Christmas and New year because the Vets are seeing more cases, so we come in and we deal with urgent cases which are the things that we feel can't wait until after the New Year but don't necessarily need to be seen straight away, so they're urgent rather than emergencies. Over that period, we typically have about 20 people in the building during that time.

What type of emergencies would you usually see on Christmas Day?

The most common emergencies that we see on Christmas Day are animals with a spine or a disc disease, so dachshunds as they have a really long body and can slip a disc the way a human can which is an emergency as they're unable to walk and it damages the spinal cord, so time is of the essence. They'll come in and have an MRI or CT, depending on how severe they present and then they'll go straight to surgery. These are the most common emergencies.

Over Christmas we see quite a lot of animals who've eaten chocolate which is toxic to dogs and cats, and dogs tend to eat it a lot more so we'll see and manage those cases as well as those with foreign bodies which are things that they shouldn't have eaten such as bones and tinsel. When they eat tinsel, because it's very long, it concertinas in their intestines and it has to be pulled out. Corn on the cobs are another one because they're not very easily digested and get stuck in the intestines, so be careful when throwing away your corn on the cobs. We've also removed baubles from a



dog's intestine, and my most memorable was when a dog ate the centre of a Kinder Surprise egg which was stuck in it's oesophagus, and we had to get that out using a scope (camera). When we pulled it out, there was a lot of joy and a lot of guessing about what the toy was going to be, so that was added entertainment.

Is Christmas day often a busy day?

It's really variable, some days it's fairly quiet and some are more busy. A couple of years ago they did nine emergencies and then last year they only had two or three, but the nature of our work is very variable, it's the same even on a day-to-day routine basis but the staff like to have a little bit to do, even though it feels a bit sad because it involves sick animals.

Do you have many inpatients in over that period?

The majority of inpatients are recovering from spinal surgery as they need rehab afterwards, so they can't always wee straight away and they often take a while to learn to walk. There's a lot of physiotherapy, rehabilitation, pain management and generally helping them. One of our favourite's over Christmas was a Labrador that couldn't walk as he'd had surgery and his owners were very elderly and they lived up three flights of stairs, so they couldn't physically get him in and out of the flat, so he had Christmas dinner with all the staff and he loved it, he thought it was the best thing ever.

Do staff have Christmas dinner at the hospital?

Yes, we've got a nice big teaching seminar room with a great big screen and they'll often put the King's speech on

Over Christmas we see quite a lot of animals who've eaten chocolate which is toxic to dogs and cats... my favourite one is when a dog ate the centre of a Kinder Surprise egg... When we pulled it out, there was a lot of joy and a lot of guessing about what the toy was going to be...



Top left: Vet, Dan Bachelor with 2 final year vet students prepare to take a blood sample. **Top Right:** Radiography Nurse Frederike Schiborra examining a CT scan. **Bottom:** Nurses Vic Twist & Laura Ayton (background) taking good care of a patient.

that too. We do midday checks on the animals, give them all the medications they need and check they're alright. We'll take them for a wee and then we have a really nice tradition, we have a lot of people from a lot of different countries within the hospital, it's a good diverse community and everyone brings in a dish from their culture or country at Christmas and we learn a lot about how people celebrate it and about the whole festive period in other countries, so that's really nice. It really brings everyone together and you can make people feel a little bit at home.

Nurse because that's when the bats are out. She works until 1am. There is a Nurse that works overnight as well and an Animal Care Assistant who helps out with holding animals for checks, cleaning out kennels and makes sure there's a clean bed for them.

How do they celebrate New Year's Eve at the Hospital?

We normally do midnight checks to give the animals their meds, so on New Year's Eve, everyone tries to finish a little bit earlier so they can all go and

department, we describe ourselves as like a little village. Over Christmas everyone's generally very cheery and in the Christmas spirit. There's still that serious aspect of dealing with emergencies and the very worried clients and it's always difficult over Christmas if your animal gets sick because it adds to the stress and the strain of everything, but if your animal is with us at Christmas, then it gets special Christmas treatment.

Can people visit their animals over Christmas?

It very much depends on the animal and also how busy the rest of the hospital is because if staff are with a client, it takes them away from being able to deal patients, but we do try. Some animals obviously know their owners and what we don't want to do is take them to their owners and then take them away again and get their hopes up that they're going home because sometimes you can see them looking a bit sad when they've left, but if we think it's the right thing to do we definitely try and facilitate that. Some of the animals don't eat as well in the hospital because it's a bit stressful, so when their owners visit they'll eat with their owners, and that's quite nice.



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If you get called out for surgery in the middle of your Christmas dinner, you know it isn't about you, it's about the animal and that's why we're doing what we're doing.

Do staff also work through the night?

Yes, we have a Veterinary Surgeon on site available 24/7 and an Intern who works a night shift, they'll often have Christmas lunch with their family then have five or six hours sleep and then come in to do a night shift. We also have a Nurse who does a late shift. It's a twilight shift, so we call her Bat

have a glass of fake champagne together and celebrate. A couple of years ago we were in the middle of surgery on New Year's Eve, so we all started singing Auld Lang Syne at midnight.

How have you personally found working over that period?

It's my mum's birthday on Christmas Day, so I nearly always get away without having to work on Christmas Day but the whole Christmas period becomes a family celebratory atmosphere and we're a very close team anyway. Even though there's about 170 of us in the



Top & middle: Patients feeling a bit sorry for themselves in recovery. **Bottom:** Nurse Ali Keating & 2 students in the most important room in the hospital, the food preparation area.

Do people bring presents in for their animals for Christmas day?

Yes, we've had lots of strange presents for animals and for staff. We have clients bring in particular things that their animal likes like a cup of tea at a certain temperature which they bring in and say "this is the tea they like and how they like it", and things like that. And you know, a lot of staff have had little Christmas figurines or tree ornaments brought in for them, we've even had someone bring in Christmas pyjamas one year, which was a nice thing because it made us think, oh, maybe we should have a Christmas Pyjama party for our staff, which we did and we all watched a film together the week before Christmas so they were a good owner and it inspired us to have a staff party. There's a lot of us and it's really hard to go out for a Christmas party together because of the nature of the way we work.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

When you do what we do all day, every day, to us it's completely normal, we don't really think about the festive period as closed days, you just think, OK I'm working today. We have a staff member from New Zealand and she's finally getting to go home this year as she hasn't been home for Christmas since she started with us six years ago, so that's a really nice thing.

It's also very easy to focus on just the Vets but it's also the Nurses, the Animal Care Assistants, and the Cleaners who still come in and clean the buildings over Christmas. We've got a really big team and a lot of people behind the scenes. Our Receptionists also come in on closed days to welcome the occasional patient and get them admitted and they are that nice friendly face when you arrive. So it's really a huge team effort.

Our Christmas Day team this year will be:

Nurses: Lisa, Marian, Ruthie and Paula.B.

Animal care assistant: Samantha

Vets: Margo (oncology resident), Maria (cardiology lecturer), Eithne (surgery professor), Becky (surgery resident), Rory (neurology resident), Miguel (anaesthesia senior lecturer), Fraser (Diagnostic imaging reader) **Intern:** Kaitlin, on night shifts.



Left: Will Humphries, Lecturer in Diagnostic Imaging, & Blanca Serra Gomez, Resident in Diagnostic Imaging performing an ultrasound on a dog.

Right: A poorly inpatient being hand-fed. Squeazy cheese makes everything better.

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LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL NETWORK

Left to right: Sarah Callicott (T-Level Placement Coordinator, Birkenhead 6th Form College), Jan Brett (Technical Development & Planning Officer, UoL), and Jo Hartley-Metcalf (T-Level Lead, Birkenhead 6th Form College).

FUTURE-PROOFING OUR TECHNICAL WORKFORCE

LivUniPeople talks with Jan Brett, Technical Development & Planning Officer, about her exciting outreach work with students from Birkenhead 6th Form College which aims to grow our Technicians of the future.

A “T-level” is a two-year technical qualification designed by businesses and employers to give students the skills that UK industry needs. The qualification was developed as part of a national response to increase the number of skilled UK technicians across all sectors. (www.tlevels.gov.uk)

T-levels are now one of the three major options for 16 to 19-year-old students to study at level 3; alongside Apprenticeships and A’ levels. Each T-level is split into 3 sections;

1. A Technical Qualification (TQ) – where students will learn about their chosen sectors through a curriculum designed by employers. This will be 1800 hours of learning over the 2-year course.
2. Industry Placement – for a minimum of 45 days – that will give students practical insights into their sector and an opportunity to embed knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. Students will be treated like an employee in the workplace.
3. English, Maths and Digital skills.



...we were all really excited about the potential to work together and create something really special for our local children.

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL NETWORK



It will help us create a really creative and diverse workforce while at the same time up-skill our own Technicians.

T-levels are now starting to be taught at some schools and further education colleges and a list of providers can be found [here](#).

Numbers of T-level students will grow over the coming years as more T-levels are rolled out and more providers come on board. This means the numbers of students needing a placement is going to increase and it is vital therefore that we, as local employers, engage with our near providers to facilitate students in gaining these technical qualifications.

One of our local colleges is Birkenhead 6th form college and they started, in September 2022, to run a T-level in Science, with an occupational specialism in Laboratory Sciences. (<https://www.bsfc.ac.uk/tlevels>). The college has a designated T-level coordinator (Sarah Callicott, previously Jacqui Hammond) and a T-level lead (Jo Hartley-Metcalf) who reached out to all local employers in the region about offering placements. Fortunately, this included us at Liverpool University and luckily for me; the email was forwarded to me as the Technical Development and Planning Officer in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

I first had a conversation with the College in January 2022 and we were all really excited about the potential to work together and create something really special for our local children. For us at the University it is about training future technicians to be exactly what we need, in order to get really skilled applicants coming to work with us in the future. Its a chance to give back to the local community and inspire these young scientists. It will help us create a really creative and diverse workforce while at the same time upskilling our own technicians in supervisory and leadership skills. It's a win-win all round!

I pitched the proposal to offer placements during the regular meetings I hold with our Faculty Technical Managers and then arranged a meeting for those that were both interested and had capacity to take a student on. As I also sit on our University

Technician Commitment Steering Group, and I took the proposal there and gained more interest from colleagues in the Faculty of Science and Engineering as well. Outreach to schools and engaging with T-levels is one of our actions for Sustainability within our technical workforce in our 3-year action plan submitted as part of our [Technician Commitment](#).

We are hoping to offer five placements initially and Jo and Jacqui came into the University to visit technical leads and look at our facilities in each of the areas that we are offering a placement. We then wrote job descriptions for the prospective students explaining what they would be working on during their time here.

This September the T-level course began at the college and seven students have enrolled. I was invited to meet the students and give an overview of the placements we're offering here at Liverpool. The students were really engaged and positive, so we then arranged visits for the group to come on site and look at the facilities for themselves. We are now waiting to hear if the students want to apply for our placements and the college have said we can be involved in the recruitment phase as much as we like - even getting involved in any interviews if we wish.

If the students do come to us, the college will arrange all DBS checks needed for the placement supervisors and we would expect the students to begin working with us from January 2023. We will also be following our University Policy on the Safeguarding of Children. The college will support us as providers throughout the placements, I will help liaise and will also take on a pastoral role looking after our T-level students.

It is a really exciting time for the T-level students, for us at Liverpool University and for the whole UK as these new qualifications are rolled out. So, join up with your local community and get involved!

Join us @LivUniTechNet
Email us technet@liverpool.ac.uk

From a set of images labelled 'Precinct of Winter', 1970's-1980's. This one shows Bedford Street South which is home to the Department of Music today (Ref: A268/19)



Colleagues in the Special Collections & Archives Team have done it again with these glorious photos of the Liverpool Campus from years gone by. See if you can recognise the locations.



Above: From the 'Precinct of Winter' set of images (Ref A268/19), showing a snowy view of buildings along Oxford street taken from outside the Sydney Jones Library, with the Metropolitan Cathedral in the background.

LET IT SNOW



Above: Abercromby Square in deep snow, (Ref: A268/19 University Buildings 1970's-80's).

Right, top photo: Ponies in a snowy field at Leahurst Campus 1980's (Ref: A268/28).

Right, bottom photo: Snow on construction site for Senate House, 8th December 1967 (Ref: P8165/47).



WHITE CHRISTMAS



SNOW BACK IN TIME

Left: Two cars parked in the snow between Harrison Hughes Engineering Laboratories and the Anatomy Building. Some of the car registrations date from as early as 1932. (Ref:D361/1/96 & D361/1/97)

Above & Right: Group of 9 students walking in the snow, 1932. (Ref: D424/1/12), 3 students playing in the snow (Ref D424/4/10), 4 female students standing by a snowman 1932(Ref: D4242/4/11).

KEEEEEEEEP DANCING

Hilary Clarke from The Academy talks to LivUniPeople about her amazing Strictly Come Dancing experience in aid of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.



Left to right: Hilary and dance partner Kevin Tucker holding their Strictly trophies.

Can you tell us about yourself and what you do at the University?

I'm Hilary Clarke, I'm an Organizational Developer in the Academy and I look after the Leadership programmes for Senior Leaders, I started in January this year, so I'm still fairly new.

Tell us about why you wanted to join a Strictly come dancing challenge?

The challenge is an annual event to raise funds for Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation. I actually went along to last year's event to show my support for a colleague who I worked with in my previous role, and it was such a great evening raising over £42,000 for charity, so I thought it would be something nice to get involved in. It's a subject quite close to my heart as two of my friends lost their husbands to lung cancer

last year so I just felt that it would be something I could do give back to that charity. I used to dance a very long time ago but I'd never done Latin or Ballroom dancing before so it was a really nice opportunity to learn a particular dance and also raise money for charity.

How much time did you have to practice?

The event took place in November but we started practising in July. We were given 10 lessons and you get a choreographer who helps you with the steps, you don't get to choose your dance or your partner, they're given to you by the Judges.

What dance did you do?

I did the Samba, which to be honest is probably one of the dances that I'm

least familiar with so it was a bit of a surprise. I would have preferred the quick step. When you apply, you do an audition and they give you some Waltz and Latin dance moves then judges walk around and decide who's doing what, so I must have wiggled my hips too much because I ended up getting the Samba. You do get to pick your music though, so that's something that you have a little bit of control over.

What music did you chose to dance to?

I chose Shakira, 'Hips Don't Lie' because it had a bit of wiggle in it and a good rhythm, it has to be a rhythm that fits with the timing of the dance so we chose the Bambo version which was a good piece of music to dance to.

How many people take part in the event?

There were ten couples and a mix of different dances including a Quick step, Foxtrot, American Smooth, Latin, Cha Cha Cha, Jive, Samba, and two Tangos, so there was a bit of a mix for everybody.

What was your score on the night?

I got 2 nines and a 10 – always a thrill to get a ten from the judges. I was quite pleased with my score and I got some nice feedback from them too. I didn't win anything, but there were awards for most technical, most improved and overall winner, which was a mixture of panel scoring plus votes. Voting actually opens before the event. But for anyone sponsoring me who'd also paid for a ticket, I said they didn't have to vote as well because people have already donated, so that probably didn't help me to win but it's not about the winning at the end of the day, it was about taking

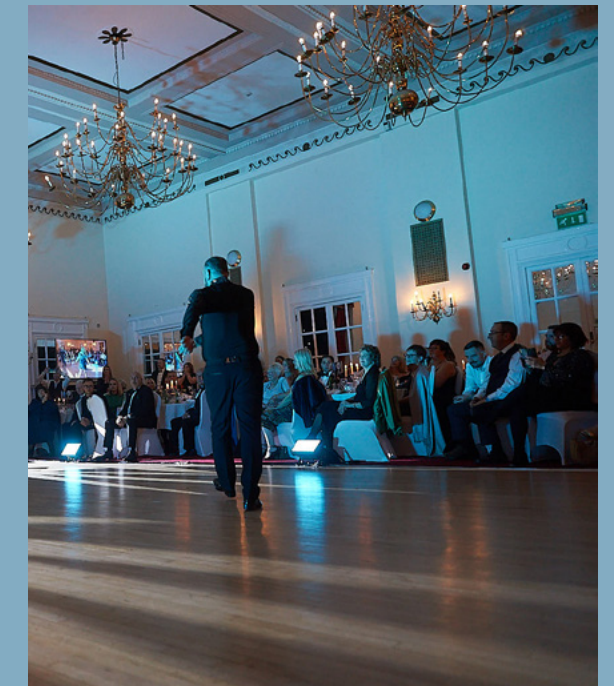


By the end of the night, there's such a lovely camaraderie, everyone's rooting for each other. They also do a group dance with previous contestants and I'm going to do the group dance next year.

This year's event took place in the Adelphi Hotel and if anyone would like to take part next year, they can contact me and I can get them an expression of interest form, they'll send you an application form and you just include why you want to do it and a little bit about yourself and then they invite you to be part of the Strictly family.

You don't have to be a dancer to do it, you're looked after, it's choreographed and people help each other out. A lot of people who took part this year are going to start professional dance lessons after it, so it's given them the dance bug and it's just a nice community of people.

If anyone wants to talk to me about my experience or make a donation they can drop me an email and I'd be happy to chat.



Photos: Hilary and dance partner Kevin in full swing.

part.

What did you think of the Samba, was it easy to learn?

I've never done Latin dancing before and it's very much about the counting so you have to be on the beat of the music with each count and there were over 100 different steps, so lots of steps and names to learn. We started renaming some of the steps so I could remember them. It keeps your brain active because you have to remember all your steps and it was quite a challenge.

Did you get any injuries from dancing?

Only sore feet! By the time I finished, I was on my third pair of dance shoes, because the first two pairs hurt and were too high, so I actually ended up investing in some dance shoes. I think that was a bit of a shock to the system. I've not been used to

dancing in heels and in Latin dances, particularly the Samba you're dancing on your toes, so you need to dance in heels. So that was also quite a challenge.

How much did you raise and total?

So far I've raised £1895 and in total the event has raised over £38,000 and it's still rising, I'm still getting donations coming in which is great.

If anyone would like to take part in next year's fundraising event, how can they get involved?

I would say to anyone who enjoys watching Strictly or enjoys dancing, it's a great experience. I would highly recommend it. You're fundraising for charity as well, which is lovely, and it keeps you fit, increases your lung capacity and the people are just lovely.



ENGINEERING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your role at the University?

I'm Professor Kate Black, I'm a Professor of Manufacturing in the School of Engineering and I'm also an entrepreneur. I'm a Chemist by training, but my research area is in Manufacturing, particularly in 3D printing or what we call Additive Manufacturing.

In October 2019, I set up an Additive Manufacturing company (Meta Additive) through an EPSRC (Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council) grant at the University, specializing in the printing of metals and ceramics, but really coming at it from a materials point of view. A lot of what we see in 3D printing is mainly focused on the machines and not on the materials used, but if we're going to see the benefits of 3D printing in the future we need to start looking at the material, and this is what I do in my research life at the University, but also with my industrial hat on.

How long have you worked at the University?

I started as a PhD student at the University in 2004 when I was 24 years old, studying partly in Chemistry and partly in Engineering in Material Sciences. I then worked as a Postdoc for four years before leaving to go to Cambridge for a year before coming back again to work with Professor Matt Rosseinsky in

the Chemistry Department.

I used to work in something called Atomic layer deposition, which are the manufacturers of very thin films which is the opposite of what I'm doing now, and one day I had an idea that they could be jetted out of inkjet heads, and that's how my research career as an Academic started. I was unemployed and I had finished various postdocs and didn't want to work for somebody else, and I really loved doing research. I was kept on by the University as an Honorary Researcher and I started writing a grant proposal to look at exploiting chemistries and moving them into a new discipline, the world of inkjet printing. I got a colleague from the School of Engineering to submit the grant and we got it, which meant I got a job here as a Postdoc. I then went for an interview for a lectureship position in the school of Engineering and was successful and that was the beginning of my academic career.

Can you tell us about your career journey?

LivUniPeople talks with one of our first female Professors in Engineering, Kate Black, about her career journey, hopes for the future for females in STEM, and her passion for sustainable Engineering.



Well, it was very touch and go if I would even go to University. I'm dyslexic and was told that I would never get into University, which I ignored and I applied to Bangor University as they had a national dyslexia institute there, which unfortunately closed down two weeks after I arrived.

I was offered a place studying Chemistry in the days when you actually had to physically have a face to face interview. I'm really fortunate that was the case back then because I'm not sure I would get into University on today's system with the grades that I had, I didn't do very well in my A levels.

After my interview they called up my mum and said "Kate will be coming to Bangor, she's got a place no matter

whether she fails her A levels or not" so somebody there saw something in me. To be told you couldn't do something but then you go on to do it, is very liberating. I really liked learning but I struggled at school with writing things down under time conditions and because of that, I was misunderstood as being a bit stupid and lazy, but I kept persevering and I got through to do my degree.

I didn't get a "good" degree, I got a Third, but 90% of it was examined and I just couldn't write things down within the time conditions. I was getting Firsts in all my lab work so again they said "I think there's something about Kate" and I was allowed to stay on to do a Master's degree which suited me because it was more practical based. After getting my Master's degree I applied to come to Liverpool, I always wanted to do a PhD but didn't think I would ever be able to but I thought "well I've got nothing to lose, the worst thing they could say is no".

There were three or four significant people that saw something in me, believed in me and gave me a chance and I think sometimes people just need that chance and that confidence that somebody believes in you, so when my PhD Supervisor offered me the PhD of course I took it and I've never looked back.

I think there's always ways around things and that's how I ended up being an Academic, applying my research from my PhD to a different sector and because I came to a different sector from a different discipline, it gave me a really unique perspective on things. I realised that there was a lot in that area of research and I was getting grants and was breaking barriers that hadn't been broken before, and coming up with new

"...I'm Dyslexic and was told that I would never go to University, which I ignored..."

innovation.

What challenges you've had to overcome as a female in a STEM environment?

Being a female Academic in an engineering department was quite lonely when I first started because there weren't many of us, in fact, I think myself and Jude Curran were the first female appointed Academics but now there's 16 of us and that's changed the way the department is, but it also changes the way you do research. When you're in a minority, you have to come at it from a different point of view, sometimes you'll have to try twice as hard as others and I was used to doing that because I've always had to do that. It can be quite lonely for those female students

"I'm really passionate about Scientists and Engineers understanding their responsibility for the survival of the human race."

in classes of 350 and there's maybe 20 of them, so now they're seeing female academics at the highest level of the institution which is a real boost for them. There are still a lot of challenges but it's not for the individual to overcome, it's something society needs to overcome as there's still a lot of prejudices and you do feel different, I still do and I'm a Professor but you know that you're paving the way for others because until this year, there were no female Professors in the School of Engineering.

There are many incidences that have happened to me as an Academic which male colleagues would never have to deal with and it's not just in academia, it's very much in industry as well, particularly in Manufacturing as people have pre-conceived ideas about you. I can be sat around the table and come up with an idea and then five minutes down the

line, a man will come up with the same idea and everyone will go "Oh, that's a good idea", or someone will ask if I'm here to make the teas or write minutes. I feel privileged that I'm in a position now where it shows other Academics and our students that there is a role for me in Engineering.

What are you most passionate about in your field?

I'm really passionate about Scientists and Engineers understanding their responsibility for the survival of the human race. Often we manufacture and design things in a bubble and we don't see what impact that has, we can't always predict it, but I think we need to have more responsibility, more responsible research and more

understanding of the impact our technologies could have on society, so I'm very passionate about that and making sure that not only do we have the right technology, but we have the right mindset to survive as a species.

What's your proudest moment of your career so far?

Being promoted to Professor. We actually sold Meta Additive in September last year and a lot of people have said "What do you mean, how is being a Professor better than selling the business?" But because of the background I came from and being told I would never go to University to do this, you can't get better than that.

Is there anything up and coming in your field that you're particularly excited about for the future?

I'm a big advocate of something called solution focused practice. As humans we're problem focused because we have to be. When we were running across the Serengeti getting chased by wild animals, we had to be alert and we had to look at problems around us and psychologically that's ingrained in us because of the way our brains have evolved. Most Scientists and Engineers look at problems and there's one key problem to that, if we focus on problems, we don't see them in the wider context so by fixing one problem, we may be inadvertently causing another problem down the line, so I'm a real advocate of looking at solutions first, it's not just technology, it's the mindset and the technology that goes with it.

How did your work change during the pandemic?

I'd just started Meta Additive and was working from home whilst also organizing the guys here to 3D print visors for the three hospitals, so as well as trying to do my research, get to grips with the fact that we're in a global pandemic and setting up a company, I was also doing that for the first three months. Setting up a company was really challenging but because we were a new start-up, we didn't have the numbers or the constraints that other companies had so we could start writing grant proposals. We were working in our sheds developing the printers, developing the formulations because we knew if we didn't, it would be make or break for the business.

What would you like to see change for women working STEM?

I don't think it's going to happen in my lifetime, but I just want to see a level playing field. I think we're doing ourselves a disservice by not having a diverse workforce and that doesn't just mean a gender balance, it's race, cultural background, age, neuro-diversity,

diversity in the full sense of the word. I would love to be able to walk into an institution that was truly diverse by the very heart. I think we've got a long way to go but good things are happening and people are doing great things all over the world.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to follow your career footsteps?

Don't always take the first response. I'm never going to be a world-renowned author as writing isn't something I'm good at, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't have gone to University. There are always different ways around things and that's what I'd say to people, keep on trying and keep on trying from a different point of view. I've had senior academics when I was younger say "Oh no, don't do that" and if I'd listened to them, I wouldn't be where I am today.

I'd also say perseverance! You're not always going to get the full complete answer from one person or even from one discipline, you need to search widely to solve the challenges we face as a species. It's not just Chemists needing to work with Physicists, we all need to work together. People from the Arts, Humanities, Business, Psychology, Science and Engineering all need to work together to tackle the challenges. If we don't do that, I think we'll be in trouble.

"I just want to see a level playing field. I think we're doing ourselves a disservice by not having a diverse workforce and that doesn't just mean a gender balance, it's race, cultural background, age, neurodiversity, diversity in the full sense of the word."

BRINGING THE MAGIC BACK TO FESTIVAL GARDENS

LivUniPeople spoke to Technician Mark Burnley, about how he used one of his volunteering days to revive a fond childhood memory.



Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm Mark Burnley and I work in the Electronics workshop in the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering. I'm a Technician, so I fix things and solve problems or faults with pieces of equipment and I've worked here for 6 years.

What made you want to get involved with clearing up Festival Gardens?

I have a bit of history with Festival Gardens, I actually went there as a junior school student when I lived over the water on the Wirral. I got the ferry over to visit the site when I was about 10 years old and back then it was an amazing place. When I was older, I moved to Liverpool and lived on Lark Lane for 12 years and I'd often explore it when it was a deserted jungle, but to see all those beautiful things like the Japanese Garden and the Yellow Submarine all falling apart and damaged was heart breaking.

I saw this volunteer day to help clear up Festival Gardens advertised and I thought "I'll have a go at that" because having spent all those years as a child watching the magic of it and then seeing its decay was really sad, and having

walked around it recently, I jumped at the chance to get involved.

What did you and the other volunteers do on the day?

We all got there bright and early. I didn't know anyone as it was people from all different departments which was great as we all had a good chat. There was a massive pile of gardening equipment left for us, and it was like 'pick your weapon'. I have a bit of history with doing conservation work, when I left school I worked for the British Trust Conservation Volunteers putting in paths and pulling down trees, clearing shrubs and I'd also volunteered for the Park Rangers so I enjoy doing physical work outdoors.

Some of the volunteers were painting the Japanese pergola and we had loads of litter pickers. There were about 20 staff and student volunteers. We could have definitely done with more people to help out, which brings me on to mention the University's Volunteering Scheme as I don't think it is known to a lot of people. When I was looking into this, my colleague said "I think you can get a paid day to do that", so I looked on the intranet and sure enough, there was the [LivtoGive](#) volunteering framework which gives you 3 paid days off for approved volunteering activities per year, so I leapt at that, you don't have to take a day's holiday and it's all supported by your work!



I have a bit of history with Festival Gardens, I actually went there as a junior school student when I lived over the water on the Wirral. I got the ferry over to visit the site when I was about 10 years old and back then it was an amazing place.

Photo: Mark with other volunteers tackling undergrowth at Festival Gardens.



Photos: A before and after of an area of rocks at the lake's edge.

What did it look like when you arrived?

I'd never seen anything like it, it was brambles, nettles and a whole load of vegetation which was choking the trees around the Japanese garden and they needed a fighting chance. It was also an absolute mess with loads of litter so three of us got stuck in with the big choppers cutting it all back. I'd never seen brambles so big, they were as thick as your thumb but we pulled them all out which was brilliant. We managed to clear a huge path and they had a place where we could take all of the vegetation to rot so we spent the whole day, shifting, clearing, and making space.

How did everyone decide who did what on the day?

I'm always drawn to blades and choppers because of my work with the British Trust Conservation Volunteers and I wanted to get stuck in as I saw it as a challenge, some wanted to paint the pergola which needed a lick of paint. Others were clearing up all the litter which was also a big job. In the undergrowth we come across beer cans from the 90s and old packs of sandwiches so we ended up with about 12 or 15 massive bin bags full of rubbish just from that small patch.

What was the most rewarding part of the day?

Using my time positively to make something big happen in such a small space of time. It was a great activity and I met some great people. The most rewarding bit was actually taking that mental snapshot from when we arrived and it was deep thick undergrowth, I was standing up to my neck in nettles and brambles at one point, compared with the end of the day when you could walk along the path was brilliant.

We also had a couple of cyclists stop and chat and say "thanks for that, that's



Photos: The iconic Japanese pergola restored to its former glory in a beautiful shade of red.

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(The most rewarding part of the day) was using my time positively to make something big happen in such a small space of time... and I met some great people.



great we've got enough width to cycle two a breast now" which was great, and others would come past and chat to us saying "I used to work for you" or "my son studied there" so it was nice representing the University doing something for the community.

People don't really see what we do and it was nice to meet and talk to people in the community doing something outside of our day to day job, we even met a local counsellor who was out walking his dog so it was just nice to be out in the public rather than hidden away. I spend most of my time in the workshop or laboratory gazing down a microscope soldering, so to be outside in nice weather, meeting new people and that whole team work and comradeship was great. We all got on and I made some really good friends there. I thought I'd be really tired the next day because we'd be slashing undergrowth and sawing brambles for 8 hours but I actually felt like I could do it again.

Would you recommend it to others who are interested in volunteering?

Definitely. The fact you can get free day to go do something cool is a great thing, and the University supports it! If there's something you're really passionate about you can actually use your allowed volunteering time, and I had no idea I could do this. I felt quite buzzed at the end of it because I'd been doing physical work out in open and it was nice to get a bit of fresh air and a full body workout too.



Photos: A group photo of all the volunteers who worked so hard to transform the gardens.

Did you know?

Staff can use up to 3 paid days per academic year to participate in volunteering activities.

Find out more on the [Liv to Give](#) webpages [here](#).

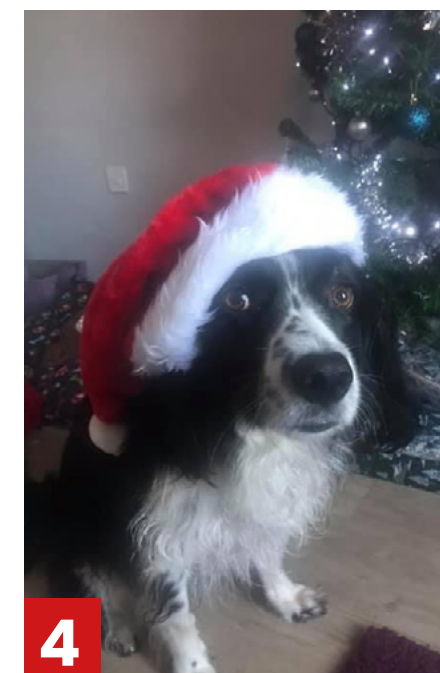
LIVUNI PETS



We asked LivUniPeople readers to send us their festive pet pics, and like Santa on Christmas Eve, they delivered. Get ready to enjoy some cuteness.

1: Meet Mylo the 'Schnoodle' (a miniature Schnauzer and a miniature Poodle cross). Here he is on the Liverpool campus in front of the Christmas tree in University Square. Mylo belongs to Chris Readitt from Strategic Change.

2: Winner of the best pet names goes to Vikki Marshall from International Admissions, with her 3 guinea pigs Leilani, Dita Von Pig, and Spike. They are all from Freshfields Animal Rescue and they are a little family. (No, You're crying). Leilani (the grey one) is the mum of Dita and Spike. They were justly rewarded for their modelling skills with cucumber.



3: This is Lola the German Shepherd and she belongs to Natalie Ennis from The Academy. She's waiting by the tree for her presents like a good girl.

4: Here's Henry who belongs to Jennie Matthews from the HR Business Partner Team. Doesn't he look festive?

5: Alfie belongs to Steph Dolben from the Department of Research and Impact Strategy, and his collar is the perfect shade of red for the festive season.



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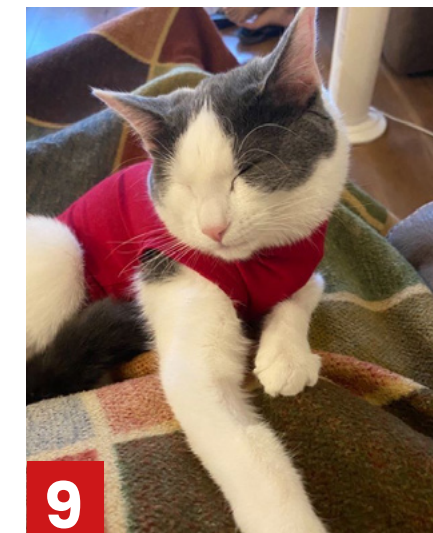
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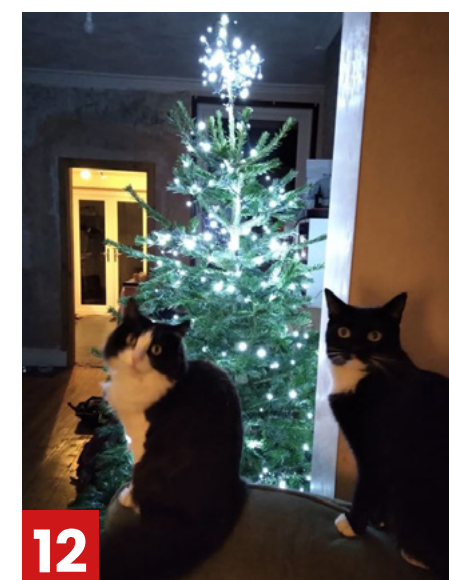
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6: This is Amity, who belongs to Rosita Spenton from the Development and Alumni Relations Team. Amity thinks she is the best and only present needed under the Christmas tree this year, and we think she might be right.

7: Milo, caught red-pawed stealing the bow off a present. After a 15 minute pursuit, the bow was retrieved. Milo looks like the goodest boy that ever did live, but his owner Kelly Vernon from The School of Law and Social Justice knows otherwise.

8: Barty belongs to Chris Hines in Marketing. He is a 3 year-old Chihuahua rescue. He loves Christmas, especially the wrapping paper, so he gets to open everyone's presents for them.

9: Penny, aged 1, wrapped up warm in her Christmas jumper. Penny belongs to Karishma Asher in the Equality & Diversity Team.

10: Marmite and Shadow belong to Clare Barrett from the Library.

11: Meet Holly, the miniature Dachshund, so named because she was a Christmas present for owner Carol Oliver from the Management School 6 years ago. Tired of embarrassing costumes, Holly has gone for a classier look this year as she poses for the family Christmas card.

12: Stevie and Cam (Stevie is the fluffier cat), belong to Niall Booth from Marketing.

13 & 14: Last but not least, this is Ralph, who belongs to Jill Marc from the Management School. Ralph clearly loves to play dress up, and here he is in two different festive ensembles. Tres chic.



GET INVOLVED

We're always looking for new features to include in LivUniPeople magazine, so if you've got something you would like to share, get in touch for a chat.

Email: equality@liverpool.ac.uk